

School Program Guide



ODC Network programs provide hands-on experiences that encourage a sense of wonder of the natural world. We are advancing outdoor education and conservation in West Michigan.



Outdoor Discovery Center
4214 56th Street, Holland, MI 49423
616.393.9453
odc@outdoordiscovery.org

DeGraaf Nature Center
600 Graafschap Road, Holland, MI 49423
616.393.9453
degraaf@outdoordiscovery.org

Natural History Programs

The programs described below are examples of our most popular program themes. Educators are encouraged to work with staff to customize their program including activities, demonstrations, and key concepts which pertain to the Michigan Department of Education's teaching standards.

ODC = Outdoor Discovery Center, 4214 56th Street, Holland
DGNC = DeGraaf Nature Center, 600 Graafschap Rd, Holland
VRF = VanRaalte Farm, 1076 East 16th St, Holland

A River Runs Through It

Explore the Macatawa River at Van Raalte Farm! Students will learn about what makes a healthy watershed and help to determine the health of our wetlands using dip-nets, animal identification guides, and other water testing supplies. Includes up-close interaction with ODC animal ambassadors.

Location: VRF

Grades: 4th and up

Program Length: 2 hours



Birds of Prey—Live!

Hawks, owls, and falcons, oh my! Meet the live raptors who call ODC home and learn about predator/prey relationships, bird biology, and trophic levels through their stories. Touchable artifacts such as wings, talons, and skulls add new layers of fun as we learn about our feathered friends. Includes up-close interaction with ODC animal ambassadors. Onsite program includes a visit to the DeWitt Birds of Prey Center.

Location: ODC, School

Grades: 1st and up

Program Length: 1 hour offsite, 2 hours onsite

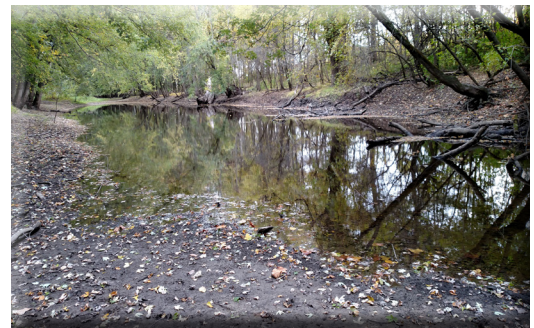
Ecosystem Exploration

Exploring the plant, animal, and non-living factors of different habitats allows us to understand what makes a space unique! Tools such as magnifying lenses, sampling nets, and journals may be used to allow young ecologists to make their own observations and build knowledge about different habitats.

Location: ODC, DGNC, VRF, Local Park

Grades: 2nd and up

Program Length: 2-4 hours



Exploring Our Dunes

Visit one of the largest groups of fresh-water dunes in the world right along Lake Michigan's eastern shoreline. On a guided hike, students will learn how the dunes were formed, and what amazing natural forces are still changing them today.

Location: City, county and state parks

Grades: 3rd and up

Program Length: 2 hours



Life in a Pond

Where do frogs, dragonflies, and crayfish live? Students visit the wetland and meet the creatures who call this habitat home. Dip-nets and hands-on tools make this a day to remember! Includes up-close interactions with ODC animal ambassadors.

Location: ODC

Grades: PreK - 1st

Program Length: 2 hours

Maps and Landforms

Students navigate new skills as they learn how to find their way using maps, compasses, and observations of the world around them! Enviroscape models and our own trail map system provide the tools to help understand the concepts of how to read maps, recognize different landforms, and where these skills are used in real life.

Location: ODC, Local Park

Grades: 2nd and 3rd

Program Length: 2 hours



Plants on the Move (Fall only)

Young botanists will explore the parts of plants, and the many different ways seeds travel through demonstrations and hands-on activities. Learn how animals interact with seeds, and search our trails to find how plants are on the move all around us.

Location: ODC, VRF, Local Park

Grades: 1st - 4th

Program Length: 2 hours

Seasonal Surprises

Get outdoors all year round! Children will discover what plants and animals are doing during different times of the year, and how changes in the weather can change a whole habitat! Special focus is paid to animal adaptations during hands-on activities and a naturalist-led hike. Includes up close interaction with ODC animal ambassadors.

Location: ODC

Grades: PreK - 1st

Program Length: 2 hours



Sensory Adventure

Become a sensory adventurer as we use our eyes, ears, nose, and more to explore! We'll use our senses on a special nature hike, and learn how animals use their senses to survive. Includes up-close interaction with ODC animal ambassadors.

Location: ODC

Grades: PreK - Kindergarten

Program Length: 1.5 hours



Spring in the Maple Sugarbush

It's maple syrup time at Van Raalte Farms! Students will find the very first signs of spring in Michigan, and learn how maple trees give us a sweet treat during this special season. Follow from the sap bucket to the sugarhouse evaporator, and help to taste the final product!

Location: VRF

Grades: Kindergarten and up

Program Length: 2 hours (Late February through March only)

Up Close & Wild

Explore our trails and exhibits, and find out what makes different animal classes unique as we visit birds, reptiles, amphibians, and mammals. This is a great program for first-time elementary visitors! Includes up-close interactions with ODC animal ambassadors and a visit to DeWitt Birds of Prey Center.

Grades: 1st - 4th

Location: ODC

Program Length: 4 hours



Up Close & Wild Jr.

What things do our ODC animals need? Food, water, shelter, and a lot of care! Young visitors will search our trails for good habitats, and meet some of the wild creatures who call these spaces home. Includes up-close interaction with ODC animal ambassadors.

Grades: PreK - Kindergarten

Location: ODC

Program Length: 2 hours



Wetland Investigation

Life cycles abound in the wetland! Visit aquatic ecosystems, and use sampling nets, identification guides, and other tools to explore who is living in our ponds, marshes, and more! Students will learn about food webs and life cycles, and discover how they can help protect our local wetlands. Includes up-close interactions with ODC animal ambassadors.

Grades: 2nd - 6th

Location: ODC

Program Length: 4 hours

Wildflowers in Spring

Come enjoy the beautiful wildflowers that bloom at DeGraaf Nature Center! Students will learn about flower parts, plant life cycles, wildflower identification, and the natural history surrounding an amazing variety of plants. Bring your hiking shoes, and we'll search the trails for fresh spring flowers!

Grades: 2nd - 5th

Location: DGNC

Program Length : 2 hours



Winter Ecology

Explore how winter impacts Michigan habitats, and how the animals living here have adapted to survive even the coldest days! Includes up-close interactions with ODC animal ambassadors. If there is at least 4 inches of snow, students grades 3 and up can snowshoe.

Grades: 1st - 4th

Location: ODC

Program Length : 4 hours

Wondrous World of Water

We're looking for water in every way! Learn about the water all around us on a journey through the water cycle, and explore water's importance in our ODC wetlands. Students will use models and their own observations to study how water can change a landscape, and how humans can impact our local watershed.

Grades: 1st - 4th

Location: ODC

Program Length: 2 hours



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Cultural History Programs

The programs described below are examples of our most popular program themes, however educators are encouraged to work with staff to customize their program including activities, demonstrations, and key concepts which pertain to the Michigan Department of Education's teaching standards.



Cultural programs are supported by the MICHIGAN COUNCIL FOR ARTS AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS and the NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS.



A Day in the Life of a French Voyageur

Head back in time to 1700s Michigan, and join a trading company as a French Voyageur! Learn about the Great Lakes fur trade using replica clothing, tools, and hands-on exploration. This program can be paired with the Michigan's Indigenous People program.

Grades: 3rd - 5th

Location: ODC, School

Program Length: 1-2 hours



Michigan's Indigenous People

As the first culture rooted in Michigan, historical and modern Anishinaabe traditions are an important part of our state heritage. Using artifacts, language, traditional houses, games, hunting tools, and life skills, students will get a taste of Woodland Period Anishinaabe history and culture. Snowshoes may be used in winter if snow allows.

Grades: 3rd - 5th

Location: ODC

Program Length: 4 hours

Homestead Holiday

Happy Holidays! Experience some of the ways that pioneers prepared for their winter holidays as we visit the log cabin freshly decorated for the season. Students will learn about Christmas trees in Michigan, hand-dip candles, and make a practical pioneer craft to take home!

Grades: 1st - 3rd

Location: DGNC

Program Length: 2 hours



Pioneer Living

Learn how the pioneers fed, clothed, and sheltered themselves in this unforgettable trip through time! Old-fashioned tools, food, and fun come together as students visit our log cabin and take on pioneer chores.

Grades: 3rd - 5th

Location: DGNC

Program Length: 2 hours

School Program Grade Level to Content Correlations

Nature Theme	Pre-K	Kinder	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	Middle	High Sch
A River Runs Through It									
Birds of Prey - Live!									
Ecosystem Exploration									
Exploring Our Dunes									
Life in a Pond									
Maps and Landforms									
Plants on the Move									
Seasonal Surprises									
Sensory Adventure									
Spring in the Sugarbush									
Up Close and Wild									
Up Close and Wild Jr.									
Wetland Investigation									
Wildflowers in Spring									
Winter Ecology									
Wonderous World of Water									
Cultural Themes									
Life of a French Voyageur									
Michigan's Indigenous People									
Homestead Holiday									
Pioneer Living									

**To learn more about school programs including program fees, go to:
outdoordiscovery.org/programs/school-programs**

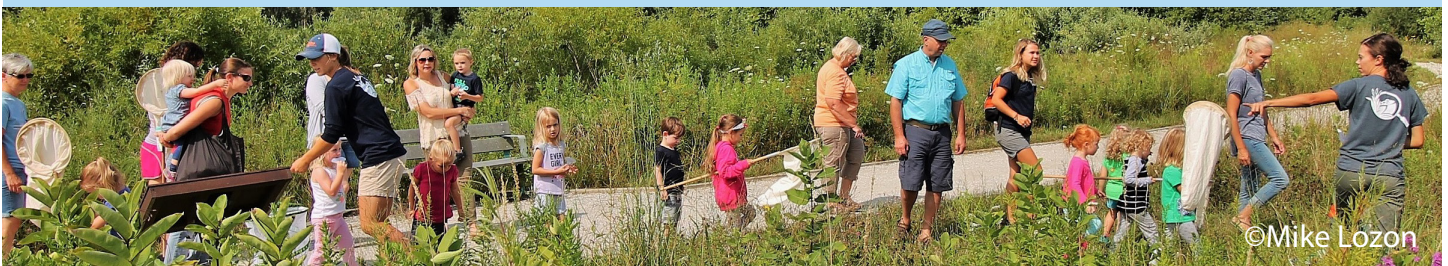
Schedule a Field Trip Program

Registration begins the first Monday of August. Program registrations are taken on a first-come, first-serve basis. Call early to have the best chance to have your preferred program date available on our program calendar.

**To schedule a program contact our office
 616.393.9453 • odc@outdoordiscovery.org**

Please have the following information available:

1. School / Organization Name
2. Teacher / Contact Name
3. Contact Information
4. Estimated number of participants
5. Theme / Concept that you would like for the program
6. Preferred season, week, date for a program



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